

DOLL JACK EPISODE

DRAWING 2

LINCOLN CHILDREN

7/20/04 015 04384



The Lincoln Children

Doll Jack Episode

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

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TAD LINCOLN'S FATHER

By
JULIA TAFT BAYNE

With Illustrations



BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1931

TAD LINCOLN'S FATHER

and Tad happened to be out of the city, in which he wrote, "Think you had better put Tad's pistol away. I had an ugly dream about him." I think it strange that his parents ever trusted him with a real pistol.

Tad had a handsome Zouave doll sent him from the Sanitary Commission fair in New York. But the only use the boys had for the doll, who was called Jack, was to hold a court-martial over him, find him guilty of sleeping on post or desertion and sentence him to be "shot at sunrise," which was done immediately, Tad and his cannon being the firing squad. Then a grave was dug among the new roses and Jack was buried with full military honors. I told them condemned soldiers were not buried with honors, but they wanted the whole performance.

I was in Mrs. Lincoln's room as she was trying on a new dress, when a dreadful noise

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floated up through the open window. "What is that noise, Julia?" asked Mrs. Lincoln.

"It is probably the 'dead march,' " I answered. "I suppose the boys are burying Jack again."

"O Julia," cried Mrs. Lincoln. "Go quick and tell them they must not dig holes among the roses. Major Watt says they will kill his young plants."

I went, although I knew they had been told about this several times before. When I reached them, I found the "dead march" being performed with much noisy desolation. They had an old broken fiddle, a banged-up horn, paper over a comb and Tad's drum. It was enough to make any decent corpse rejoice at the prospect of the grave. At that moment Major Watt arrived and looked at the yawning grave amid his rose bushes in helpless anger.

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He made a sort of hopeless gesture and said, "Boys, why don't you get Jack pardoned?"

The suggestion struck the boys with instant favor. "Come on, Bud," said Tad with enthusiasm. "We'll get Pa to fix up a pardon."

"Don't you dare bother the President," I objected severely.

"Oh, Pa won't care," said Tad, and accompanied by the three boys he clattered up the stairs to the President's private office. I followed, hoping to head them off, and found them arguing with Major Hay outside the President's office. He was objecting to their bothering the President and I was beginning to hope that he would get rid of them, when the door opened and Mr. Lincoln appeared.

"Well, boys," smiling on the group. "What's the matter?"

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"Oh, Pa," said Tad, making a flank movement around Major Hay and throwing himself at his father, "we want a pardon for Doll Jack, and Julie and Major Hay said we mustn't bother you, but I knew you'd fix it up. Won't you, Pa?"

"Pardon for Jack, eh," said the President, smiling, but with a pretense of mock gravity. "You know, Tad, it's not usual to grant pardons without some sort of hearing. You come in here and tell me why you think Jack should have a pardon."

Major Hay, with a disgusted snort, stepped aside and we trooped after the President into his office. He sat down in his big chair, crossed one long leg over the other and put the tips of his fingers together in a judicial manner.

"State your case, Tad," he said gravely.

"Well, you see, Pa," said Tad, "most

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every day we try Jack for being a spy or a deserter or something and then we shoot him and bury him, and Julie says it spoils his clothes, and Major Watt says it digs up his flowers, and so we thought we'd get you to fix us up a pardon."

The President considered this argument with due gravity; then he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "Yes, Tad, I think you've made a case. It's a good law that no man shall twice be put in jeopardy of his life for the same offence and you've already shot and buried Jack a dozen times. I guess he's entitled to a pardon." Turning round to his desk, he wrote something on a sheet of paper and handed it to Tad, saying, "There's your pardon, Tad. And I only wish, Hay," he said to his secretary, with a sort of sigh, "they were all that easy."

Major Hay did not answer. He bundled

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us out of the door with little ceremony, feeling, I presume, as disgusted as he looked at the farce he had just witnessed. But I think the President enjoyed it as a let-down from his serious duties.

When we got downstairs, Tad exhibited the pardon with great elation, saying, "I told you he wouldn't care, Julie." On his official note paper Mr. Lincoln had written:

The Doll Jack is pardoned
by order of the President.
A. Lincoln.

Tad asked me to keep this remarkable document, saying in his peculiar speech, which I have made no effort elsewhere to reproduce, "Here, Julie, keep this; no more bury'ins in the grownd."

In less than a week, however, Jack was hanging with a cord around his neck from a tree in the rear of our garden. Tad said he

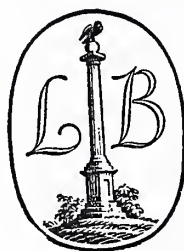
TAD LINCOLN'S FATHER

was proven to be a spy. The last time I saw poor Jack he reposed on top of the cornice of one of the East Room windows, where he had been tossed by one of the boys.

But doubtless Mr. Lincoln felt that this was one pardon that could not be criticized.

LINCOLN'S SONS

by
RUTH PAINTER RANDALL



With Illustrations

Little, Brown and Company
Boston *Toronto*

cold, windy day and the boys had colds, Mrs. Lincoln had forbidden them to go along. The resourceful "codgers," however, had some money left from the circus and they made their own arrangements. So it happened that at the review, as the President and other dignitaries passed solemnly and ceremoniously down the line of soldiers, just after them came a rickety, mule-drawn cart driven by a small, grinning Negro and containing Willie, Bud, Holly, and Tad, each stiffly holding a battered sword at salute.

Visiting the camps was one of the greatest pleasures of the boys, though Julia Taft noted that they grew tired of the constant attention they received as sons of the President. Sometimes they went with their mother and "Cousin Lizzie" Grimsley to take good things to the soldiers or to assist in christening a camp. The one named for their mother, "Camp Mary Lincoln," was the favorite with Willie and Tad, the one for which they saved the choicest gifts. Tad especially delighted in carrying presents to "his good soldiers," fruit, and other food, books, papers, and sometimes flowers he obtained by raids on the White House conservatory, to the renewed ire of Major Watt, the gardener.

Once Tad with the best of intentions took to camp and distributed a supply of religious tracts. The soldiers laughed heartily and told him they had plenty of paper to start fires with and they would rather have posies. Tad, like Robert, was very sensitive to being made ridiculous; he wept at such misunderstanding and ingratitude and his father had great difficulty consoling his "little man." It was a long time before he would visit that camp again.

The Lincoln boys, like all White House children, received many gifts. The Sanitary Commission in New York sent Tad a handsome soldier doll which he named Jack. It was dressed in the favorite Zouave uniform and must have been a very appealing toy. But Jack seems to have had a most unregenerate charac-

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ter: the boys frequently had to hold court-martial over him, finding him guilty of such things as sleeping at his post or desertion, and sentencing him to be shot at sunrise. The execution, however, would take place immediately, Tad with his cannon playing the part of the firing squad.

The dishonored soldier would then be buried inappropriately with full military honors and the place chosen for burial was among Major Watt's newly planted rosebushes. Julia Taft, who tells the story, was in Mrs. Lincoln's room one day when a strange and dreadful sound came through the window from the White House grounds without. "What is that noise, Julia?" Mrs. Lincoln asked the girl.

"It is probably the 'dead march,' " Julia answered. "I suppose the boys are burying Jack again."

Mrs. Lincoln asked Julia to go quick and tell the boys not to dig among the roses because it would kill them. Julia knew they had been told this several times before, but she was obedient, if the boys were not, and she went outdoors to deliver the message. She found the band which was playing the excruciating "dead march" consisted of a broken-down fiddle, a dented horn, a paper over a comb, and Tad's drum. About the time she reached the spot, the gardener, Major Watt, arrived, looking like a man who had had about all he could take. Out of his desperation came inspiration. He suggested that the boys get Jack pardoned.

This fine idea won instant approval all around. "Come on, Bud," said Tad enthusiastically. "We'll get Pa to fix up a pardon." Julia tried to prevent the four from bothering the President but they clattered noisily upstairs toward his office on the second floor. When she followed them, she found John Hay in the waiting room trying to head them off. This produced such an indignant protest that Mr. Lincoln in the inner office heard it and opened the door. He smiled down at the youngsters and asked what was the matter. Tad dodged around John Hay

and threw himself on his father explaining what was wanted.

Mr. Lincoln began to enjoy himself. He told Tad it was not usual to grant pardons without some sort of hearing and invited them in to tell him why Jack deserved a pardon.

John Hay gave up "with a disgusted snort" and stepped aside to let the little group follow Mr. Lincoln into his private office. There he seated himself in a judicial pose and told Tad to state his case.

Tad delivered his argument in a rush of words: almost every day they tried Jack for being a spy or deserter or something and then they shot him and buried him and Julie said it spoiled his clothes and Major Watt said it dug up his roses so they thought they would get Pa to fix up a pardon.

The President considered these facts with due gravity and then told Tad he thought he had made a case. It was a good law, he said, that no man shall twice be put in jeopardy of his life for the same offense. Since Jack had been shot and buried a dozen times, he was entitled to a pardon. Turning to his desk, on which so many pardons were to be signed, he wrote on his official paper: "The Doll Jack is pardoned by order of the President. A. Lincoln."

John Hay bundled Julia and the boys out of the door with scant ceremony. He evidently felt, like the gardener, that he had had about all he could take from those boys.

Sad to relate, Jack's pardon did not cause him to reform. In less than a week he was proved guilty of being a spy again. The boys thought it wise to have a change of venue this time and he was hanged from a tree in the Taft garden.

As the pressure of the war bore in more heavily upon their father and mother and all around them, the martial aspect of the play of the children increased. They turned a vacant room in the attic at the Taft home into an "old Capitol Prison" and incarcerated the Taft cat and a neighbor's dog as prisoners of war. (The prisoners made such vociferous protests that Mrs.

Taft released the Taft boys. They did what the boys dug a hole found a log to the great next door.

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FEATURE STORY

Tad Lincoln, Tyrant of the White House

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It was good Friday evening, 1865. While Our American Cousin was being performed at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., a gala production of "Aladdin!" or "His Wonder Lamp" was under way a few blocks away at Grover's Theatre. Just before a moment in the Aladdin extravaganza where a man was supposed to tumble to the stage from a balloon, the manager stepped to the footlights to announce that President Lincoln had been shot. For a moment there was silence, then a voice called out that it was a trick of pickpockets to set the audience in a panic. But suddenly a boy sprang from his seat and went shrieking "like a wounded deer," the papers later said, to the theatre's door and out.

Twelve-year-old Tad Lincoln had been taken to the theatre that evening by White House doorkeeper Alphonso Donn, a great favorite with the Lincoln family. Now he was driven home where his other doorman friend, Tom Pendel, tried to calm his fears and comfort him. About midnight Pendel got Tad up to his father's room, undressed him, and lay down on the trundle bed beside him till he dropped off to sleep.

Abraham and Mary Lincoln had hoped Tad would be a girl, but when he arrived on April 4, 1853, they had a fourth son. Their second child, Eddie, had died at the age of three and Willie, their third, had been less than a year younger than Eddie. Tad was a squirming little baby with a big head and Mr. Lincoln nicknamed him Tadpole along with his given name of Thomas, for the child's grandfather who had died in 1851. Tad was going to be harder to take care of than the other boys because he was born with a cleft palate, and already when he tried to drink milk it dribbled out of his mouth. There would be a speech difficulty, making his words sound queer, breathy, nasal, almost another language. When Tad tried to say "Papa's shot" that night, it came out "Papa's tot."

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PROUD SPONSOR

By the time Tad came East to live in the White House in February, 1861, he had turned out to be the exact opposite of obedient, studious Willie. Tad was mercurial like his mother-mischievous, fun-loving, work-hating, destructive, and behind his parents' backs was awarded the summing-up of spoiled brat. But Tad's naughtiness was ignored by his parents. Back in Springfield when friends came for an evening's festivity, he got out of bed and joined them in his red flannel nightshirt? and was welcome. When the Lincolns went out to dinner down the street, he followed and, was allowed to stay. When the painter Mr. Hicks arrived from the East to do Mr. Lincoln's portrait, both Tad and Willie squeezed his tubes of color against the wall and made streaks with the palms of their hands. Mr. Lincoln beamed fondly.

One time Judge Treat was playing chess with Lincoln in the State House and Tad was sent by his mother to say dinner was ready. When his father went on making moves, Tad kicked the board from underneath right off both the men's laps. The Judge was wordless, but Lincoln said mildly, "Come, Tad," and they walked away together.

At the White House Tad had a happy first year along with Willie, riding ponies and watching regiments of soldiers drill. After Willie died in the winter of 1862 Tad became even more tightly glued to the President's side. He seemed like a normal, merry boy until Willie's name was mentioned, and then he would throw himself on the floor and kick and scream as he had seen his mother do.

He was the tyrant of the White House. He turned the hose on Secretary Stanton, interrupted important state meetings with his three quick raps on the door followed by two slow bangs. His father inevitably let him in?"I promised never to go back on the code."

When a huge turkey was sent to the President in October 1864 for the family's Thanksgiving dinner, Tad begged hard for the turkey's life to be spared, and, when it was, led him about the Executive Mansion grounds on a string, calling him Jack. It was just before the November eighth balloting which would decide whether Lincoln or McClellan should be president from 1864 on, and the President called down to Tad from his office window, asking if Jack was planning to vote. Like a flash Tad answered, "He isn't of age," and the proud father repeated the story to every visitor he had for the next week.

Tad's mind teemed with plans and his body never rested. He whittled the elegant carved rosewood furniture in the White House into designs he liked better. He drove his team of goats through the East Room, riding on a kitchen chair behind them. If he saw his father walking down the hall, he would race to him and give him a tight, fierce hug "like a thunderbolt" and

dash away again. While Lincoln worked in his office until midnight, Tad would fall asleep on the floor under the President's table, and when the last paper was signed Lincoln would carry the boy down the hall to his room and lay him down on the low trundle bed and climb wearily into his own great bed.

Tad was allowed to run wild and just grow. "Let him run," said Lincoln. "There's time enough for him to learn his letters and get pokey." Tad never did become pokey. He broke the tall mirror in the White House vestibule with his ball. His father invited him to walk to the telegraph office in the War Department, where he dipped his fingers in a bottle of ink and drew them in lines along a marble tabletop. The officers in the room looked at the President indignantly. "Come, Tad," said Lincoln, with a pleasant smile. When Tad locked the door of the room in which photographers had set up their apparatus to develop pictures of his father, for once Lincoln was smileless. "Tad," he said, "do you know you are making your father a great deal of trouble?"

Tad immediately surrendered the key and burst into violent tears.

Tad was fascinated by money and hoarded it, though at the age of ten he still could not understand that a small gold dollar was the same in value as a handful of larger coins. He wanted the money that was big, and "a lot." His indulgent father often bribed his son, whom his mother called "my troublesome little sunshine," to make him be still and not break in on conversations with Cabinet members or generals.

Tad was not particular about how he made his money. Ralph Waldo Emerson was visiting the White House and heard Tad bet Secretary Seward a quarter that he could not guess what new animal he and Willie had. Seward guessed a rabbit, Tad shook his head, pocketed the quarter and left in a hurry. Willie remarked gravely to the Secretary that it had indeed been a rabbit.

On several occasions when Tad wanted to fill his pockets to bursting quickly, he bought out the supply of gingerbread and apples of an old woman who kept a stand a few blocks from the Executive Mansion and set up business beneath the big columns at the entrance of the White House, where he could put pressure on the multitude of visitors to buy his wares. His father laughed and thought Tad was clever and enterprising, just as he laughed fondly when Tad, in anticipation of a National Fast Day, hid a succulent supply of goodies from the family kitchen in the coachhouse where he could retire and munch while the nation went hungry. "If Tad lives to be a man," said the President, "he will be what all women love? a good provider."

In addition to being a trifle sharp about money matters,

Tad was tender-hearted. When a widow came to the upstairs waiting room of the White House to beg that her husband be let out of prison?her children were cold and starving she told Tad?the boy went weeping to his father, put his arms around Lincoln's knees and implored him to save the children. And within a few minutes Tad had them saved. Another time he led into his father's office a delegation that Mr. Lincoln had been trying for days to avoid seeing because he felt he could not grant their request. Afterward, when Lincoln said, "Why, Tad, did you do that?" he answered, "I thought they were your friends, and they looked so sorry." "That's right, my son," said Lincoln. "I would have the whole human race your friends and mine, if that were possible."

Sometimes Lincoln tried to get Tad to leave his office and play outside. "Tad, my dear son, go to your mother. You must be tired here."

"No, no, Papa," Tad would say, "I want to stay and see the people."

He would listen eagerly as his father talked to army officers, laughing whenever his father laughed. He was an annoyance to some of the men, who got tired of never being able to see the President alone. Some even kept back important information when they did happen to find Lincoln without his son. The feeling was, "He can't keep a secret. He would tell Tad."

Tad made full use of the tiny white cards on which his father wrote succinct messages to people in pen and ink, signing them "A. Lincoln." He got a pardon for his Zouave doll whom he had condemned to death for sleeping on picket duty. The President wrote as carefully as though he were addressing a Cabinet officer, "The Doll Jack is pardoned. A. Lincoln."

"Tad wants some flags. Can he be accommodated? A. Lincoln" served Tad's purpose perfectly, and "Captain Dahlgren may let Tad have the little gun that he cannot hurt himself with. A. Lincoln" brought him a miniature brass model on which he doted.

In the last weeks of the war the President took Tad with him to Grant's camp at City Point, Virginia. It was the first time in many months that Lincoln had left his desk, and here the boy and his father had almost a vacation together. They rode?Tad was a daring rider?but he rode in the form most comfortable to himself, with his legs in very little relation to the horse's sides. Father and son rode happily over the countryside together on horses lent them by General Grant. Lincoln rode Cincinnati and Tad Little Jeff, the blooded, smooth-paced little horse the General had captured from Mrs. Jefferson Davis in Vicksburg.

Lincoln and Tad visited the surrendered cities of

Petersburg and Richmond together. They walked hand in hand through the still-smoking capital, from the waterfront to Jefferson Davis's house, where Lincoln sank into a chair and asked for a glass of water. He must have been nervous, though he never said so, at bringing his son to this most rebel of all rebel cities, but nothing happened and the two went back up the river, looking at the floating torpedoes in the water as they passed and the jumble of wood and metal obstructions and dead horses floating.

On the night of April eleventh, as the President stood in the candle-lighted window above the White House portico, ready to deliver his last speech, someone in the crowd cried out, "What shall we do with the Rebels?" A voice answered, "Hang them!" and Tad said quickly, "Oh, no, we must hang on to them." "That's right, Tad," said his father proudly, "we must hang on to them."

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UNDATED ITEMS

and afterwards refer to. It was a receptacle of general information. Some years ago, on removing the furniture from the office, I took down the bundle and blew from the top the liberal coat of dust that had accumulated thereon. Immediately underneath the string was a slip bearing this endorsement, in his hand: "When you can't find it anywhere else, look in [*sic*] this." (Herndon, II, 315n.).

Order¹

Let these boots go through to Richmond immediately, as directed.
A. LINCOLN

¹ New York *Sun*, February 12, 1934. According to the newspaper article, Lincoln wrote this order on a small card at the request of Green Clay Smith for Mrs. Lindsey Hamilton, whose brother, a Confederate soldier wounded in the ankle, needed the specially made boots to prevent his becoming a permanent cripple.

Order Concerning Edward W. Kinsley¹

To All Officers of the Army of the Potomac:

You will allow the bearer, Mr. Edward W. Kinsley, to pass inside our lines at whatever time he may choose and at any point he may desire, and officers will see that he has proper escort.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

¹ Bowdoin S. Parker, *History of Edward W. Kinsley Post No. 113, Department of Massachusetts, Grand Army of the Republic . . .* (Norwood, Massachusetts, 1913), p. 144. This order is without date in the source, but the time is indicated as the latter part of the war, when Kinsley, a Boston merchant, was the confidential agent of Governor John A. Andrew.

Pardon of Doll Jack¹

The Doll Jack is pardoned by order of the President.

A. LINCOLN

¹ Julia Taft Bayne, *Tad Lincoln's Father* (1931), p. 137. For circumstances, see the source.

O. H. Platt¹

O. H. Platt, trying to resign an office which he does not hold.

¹ AE, DLC-Nicolay Papers. Lincoln's endorsement has been cut from an envelope. Orville H. Platt, a lawyer and legislator of West Meriden, Connecticut, may have been the man referred to (see Welles' *Diary*, August 15, 1862), but Obadiah H. Platt of Missouri, appointed additional paymaster, June 1, 1861, and dismissed June 21, 1862, is another possibility.

